

The Arian Controversy

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superficial view—of being based upon irrefutable argument. Canon Bright put the case very well where he wrote*:

" Arianism would appeal to not a few minds by adopting a position virtually rationalistic, and by promising to secure a Christianity which should stand clear of philosophical objections, and Catholics would answer by insisting that the truths pertaining to the Divine Nature must be pre-eminently matter of adoring faith, that it was rash to speculate beyond the limit of revelation, and that the Arian position was itself open to criticism from reason's own point of view. Arians would call on Catholics to 'be logical'; to admit the prior existence of the Father as involved in the very primary notion of fatherhood; to halt no more between a premiss and a conclusion, to exchange their sentimental pietism for convictions sustainable by argument. And Catholics would bid them in turn remember the inevitably limited scope of human logic in regard to things divine and would point out the sublime uniqueness of the divine relation called Fatherhood."

If we consider the subsequent history of the Arian doctrine, its continual rebirth, the permanent appeal which, in at least some of its phases, it makes to certain types of intellect including some of the loftiest and shrewdest, there can be no reason for surprise that Arius met with so much recognition and sympathy, even among those who refused him their active and definite support. Alexander was both troubled and annoyed to find that so many of

* *The Age of the Fathers*, chap. vi.